

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 NSC-05 SS-15 CAB-02 COME-00
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PEPR, KS, US
SUBJECT: KOREAN MEDIA ON TOPICS OF U.S. INTEREST, APRIL 22-24

REF: SEOUL 3326 (DTG 210748Z APR 78)

1. KAL AIRCRAFT. NEW DEVELOPMENT ON 4/24 IS PRESIDENT PAK'S STATEMENT (GIVEN HEAVY COVERAGE) IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED "DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE FRIENDLY CONSIDERATION AND ACTION TAKEN BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES IN RETURNING WITHOUT DELAY PASSENGERS AND CREW MEMBERS". PRESIDENT EXPRESSED REGRET AND SORROW FOR DEAD AND WOUNDED AND APPRECIATED ALL ASSISTANCE RENDERED BY THIRD COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS. PAK REQUESTED SOVIET AUTHORITIES TO RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TWO DETAINED CREW MEMBERS. PAK'S STATEMENT NOTES INTRUSION WAS NOT INTENTIONAL BUT CAUSED BY INSTRUMENT MALFUNCTION AND INSTRUCTED THE CONVENING OF FORMAL INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE HEADED BY VICE MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION. IN ONLY COMMENTARY ON PAK'S STATEMENT, TONGA ILBO MAKES LINKAGE THAT STATEMENT IS "OBVIOUSLY AIMING TO FIND A BREAKTHROUGH FOR RELATIONS", NOTING THIS IS FIRST STATE-
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MENT OF ITS KIND MADE TO USSR SINCE KOREAN LIBERATION. TONGA ILBO OPINES STATEMENT WILL BE A SHOCK TO NORTH KOREA. COMMENTARY CONCLUDES KAL INCIDENT WAS UNFORTUNATE, BUT DIPLOMATICALLY POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR POSITIVE BENEFIT. SECOND DEVELOPMENT IS REPORT THAT ROKG HAS ASKED U.S. FOR CONSULAR PROTECTION FOR TWO CREW MEMBERS IN USSR. MOFA SOURCES SAY REQUEST WAS

MADE BOTH THROUGH U.S. EMBASSY/SEOUL AND ROK EMBASSY/WASH.

2. TROOP WITHDRAWAL. AMIDST HEAVY KAL COVERAGE CARTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL READJUSTMENT GARNERED HEADLINE AND PROMINENT COVERAGE THROUGHOUT WEEKEND. MOFA OFFICIALS ARE QUOTED AS SAYING DECISION IS "STEP IN ITS EFFORT TO FULFILL FAITHFULLY ITS DEFENSE COMMITMENT TO KOREA". ALL PRESS RAN EDITORIALS, WHICH IN GENERAL WELCOMED PRESIDENT'S DECISION AS "WISE, COURAGEOUS" (KHONGHYANG SINMUN). EDITORIALS CONSIDERED DECISION AS FORTUNATE AND INDICATION THAT PRESIDENT HAS "RECONFIRMED THE PRINCIPLE THAT UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT COMPENSATION OR ENDANGERING KOREAN SECURITY WILL NOT HAPPEN" (CHUNGANG ILBO). PRESS NOTES WITHDRAWAL PLAN IN TOTO IS NOT CHANGED, SIMPLY READJUSTED. TOKYO/HAPTONG REPORTS JAPAN MOFA SOURCES HAVE WELCOMED DECISION.

3. JAPAN/DPRK CONTACT. FRONTPAGE COVERAGE 4/24 TO EXCERPTS FROM NEWSWEEK 5/1 EDITION SAYING NORTH KOREA AND JAPAN HAVE BEEN SECRETLY MEETING IN ULAN BATOR TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. EXCERPTS INCLUDE EARLY APRIL SUGGESTION BY RALPH CLOUGH THAT U.S. ADVISE JAPAN TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH DPRK. NO COMMENTARY AND NO ROKG REACTION YET.

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4. PAK BO-HI. ALL PRESS INSIDE-PAGED WIRE SERVICE EXCERPTS OF PAK'S 4/21 FRASER COMMITTEE TESTIMONY.

5. FOUR-PARTY CONFERENCE. TOKYO/HAPTONG REPORTS AKIRA IWAI, RECENTLY RETURNED FROM NORTH KOREA DURING WHICH HE MET WITH KIM IL-SONG, TOLD REPORTERS KIM HAS "DISMISSED IDEA OF FOUR-WAY PEACE CONFERENCE" AND "COLD-SHOULDERED" SUGGESTED SIX-PARTY CONFERENCE. SNEIDER

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